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Letter dated 26 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 26 November 1997, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 26 November 1997 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the statements made by the Greek Cypriot representative at the Third Committee on 17 and 19 November 1997, under agenda item 112 (b) and (c), in which unfounded allegations were levelled against my country. The same allegations were repeated by the representative of Greece at the said Committee.

Since the Greek Cypriot side and Greece are exploiting every opportunity to disseminate false propaganda in every international forum, where the Turkish Cypriot side is denied its lawful representation, I am compelled to respond to these allegations, once again, in writing.

The Greek Cypriot representative has tried to portray the question of Cyprus as one of human rights violations arising from the legal Turkish intervention of 1974 in the aftermath of a bloody coup d'état by Greece and its collaborators in Cyprus aimed at annexing the island to Greece. The Greek representative has made no mention of the 1963-1974 period during which even the most fundamental human rights of the Turkish Cypriot people, including their right to life, liberty and security, were grossly violated. During that period, the world witnessed unprecedented cruelty and violence which culminated in a large-scale ethnic cleansing operation that exacted a high toll on the Turkish Cypriot people. As from December 1963, hundreds of Turkish Cypriot civilians, including women, children and the elderly were murdered and thousands wounded by Greek Cypriot armed elements. The following excerpts from the world press attest to the cold-blooded massacres perpetrated by the Greek Cypriots:

> "We went tonight into the sealed-off Turkish quarter of Nicosia in which 200 to 300 people had been slaughtered in the last five days. We are the first Western reporters there and we have seen sights too frightful to be described in print and horrors so extreme that people seemed stunned beyond tears and reduced to a hysterical and mirthless giggle that is more terrible than tears."
>
> (Daily Express, 28 December 1963)

> "A few days ago, 1000 people lived here, in their solid, stone-built homes which hug the coast road to Kyrenia, 13 miles from Nicosia. Then in a night of terror 350 villagers - men, women and children - vanished. They were all Turks."
>
> (Daily Herald, 31 December 1963)

The periodic reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations bear solid testimony to the flagrant violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Turkish Cypriots during this period. The Turkish Cypriots were forced to live under conditions which the Secretary-General referred to as a

"veritable siege" in one of his reports to the Security Council (see S/5950 dated 10 September 1964).

The question of displaced persons in Cyprus did not start in 1974, contrary to what the Greek Cypriot representative has indicated in his statement. During the Greek Cypriot onslaught which began in December 1963, 103 Turkish Cypriot villages were attacked and devastated (as recorded in the Ortega report issued after an extensive survey of the destroyed villages by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in May-July 1964), rendering nearly 30,000 Turkish Cypriots homeless refugees. Again in 1974, as a result of the Greek coup d'état and its aftermath, 65,000 Turkish Cypriots fled to the north, in the face of an impending massacre, to seek refuge in safer areas. The burden of responsibility for the population movements in Cyprus between 1963 and 1974 lies heavily upon the shoulders of the Greek Cypriot administration and Greece, which have jointly wrought havoc and destruction in the name of enosis (i.e., annexation of the island to Greece).

The question of displaced persons was settled by agreement between the two sides at the third round of the intercommunal talks held at Vienna between 31 July and 2 August 1975, whereby the two sides agreed on a voluntary (not forcible expulsion, as the Greek Cypriot representative alleges) regrouping of populations in their own respective territory, the Turkish Cypriots in the North and the Greek Cypriots in the South, paving the way for a bi-zonal settlement of the Cyprus question.

The Greek Cypriot representative has made false and misleading allegations about the living conditions of Greek Cypriots residing in the Karpaz peninsula in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Suffice it to say that the Turkish Cypriot authorities do not practice any discriminatory policy towards Greek Cypriots in this region and that their living standards are on a par with those of Turkish Cypriots in the area. The Turkish Cypriot authorities have already implemented a series of unilateral goodwill measures aimed at further improving the infrastructure and living standards in the Karpaz region. The Greek Cypriot population has unrestricted access to the health-care facilities in Northern Cyprus. They are free to visit the touristic and other areas open to the public. Greek Cypriot teachers attend to the education of Greek Cypriot children in the area, using books and literature supplied from Southern Cyprus. Two new teachers have been appointed to the primary school in the Karpaz area with the permission of the TRNC authorities. Greek Cypriots living in the TRNC are able to attend religious services in places of worship without hindrance. Some 1,000 Greek Cypriots are expected to cross over to the TRNC on 30 November to attend the religious ceremony at the Apostolos Andreas monastery.

On the other hand, the situation of Turkish Cypriots in South Cyprus is not even comparable to the normal living conditions enjoyed by the Greek Cypriots in the North. The few hundred Turkish Cypriots who chose to stay in the South after 1974 are faced with inhuman social, economic and racial discrimination. They live in residential areas which are plagued by poverty and unemployment. Their freedom of movement is severely restricted by the Greek Cypriot police for surveillance purposes.

The question of missing persons, which arose in December 1963 with the onslaught on the Turkish Cypriots, is still being exploited for propaganda purposes as if it has been an issue exclusively affecting Greek Cypriots since 1974. The Greek Cypriot administration refuses to disclose the list of Greek Cypriot casualties of the coup d'état of 15 July 1974 because concealing the truth from their own people and the international community serves their short-sighted political propaganda objectives. The statement of a former Greek Minister of Maritime Affairs, Mr. Evangelos Yannopoulos, as reported by the Greek Cypriot daily Eleftherotipia dated 7 April 1988, needs no further comment:

> "The two myths in Cyprus must be exposed as lies: The first myth being the case of missing persons, and the second being the invasion of Cyprus by Turkey. Those Greek Cypriots presented as missing persons are actually Greek Cypriot victims who were killed during the coup."

We hope that the Greek Cypriot side will cease to exploit this humanitarian problem at the expense of those on both sides who have lost loved ones.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ PLÜMER
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus